United Nations DP/2004/24

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.: General
6 May 2004

Original: English

Annual session 2004
14-23 June 2004, Geneva
Item 8 of the provisional agenda
United Nations Volunteers

United Nations Volunteers*
Report of the Administrator

Elements of a decision

In taking note of the present report, the Executive Board may also wish to:

(a) Express appreciation for the activities of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in promoting volunteerism for development, including mobilizing volunteers.
(b) Recognize the achievements of the UNV programme in articulating and advocating the importance of the contributions of volunteerism, in particular the role it plays in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.
(c) Welcome the initiatives taken to extend opportunities for all citizens to engage in volunteering for development by expanding the forms of affiliation with the Programme.
(d) Call for the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to continue efforts to integrate volunteerism into their policies, programmes and reports, including as it relates to the achievement of the MDGs.
(e) Encourage governments to contribute to the UNV Special Voluntary Fund to enable UNV to further explore and demonstrate the role of volunteerism and volunteer contributions to development.
(f) Reconfirm its support for the UNV programme as focal point for the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers and support it in further developing its future role in the report of the United Nations Secretary-General to the 60th session of the General Assembly in 2005.

* The collection of data required to present the Executive Board with the most current information has delayed submission of the present document.

04-34091 (E) 030604

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Volunteerism and development: the evolving role of UNV	3
III.	Overview: 2002-2003	3
	A. Main characteristics and trends	3
	B. Programme activities	5
	C. Follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers 2001	13
	D. Lessons learned from reviews and evaluations	14
IV.	Resources management	15
	A. Financial resources	15
	B. Volunteer resources	16
	C. Management and administration	17
V.	Challenges and opportunities	18
Annexes		
	Annex I. Statistical overview	19
	Annex II. Resource planning table	20

I. Introduction

1. This report addresses the activities of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) during 2002-2003 and highlights the challenges ahead. The biennium was marked by continued dynamic growth, an evolution of the culture of partnership and networking, and a strategic decision to reinforce the added value of volunteerism in all UNV operations, building on the momentum created by the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) 2001. The contribution of UNV is articulated through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the UNDP multi-year funding framework (MYFF).

II. Volunteerism and development: the evolving role of UNV

2. The mission of the UNV programme is to maximize the contribution of volunteerism to development effectiveness and human well-being. The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs are the key parameters for implementation of the mission. This is based on the premise that achieving the MDGs will require the ingenuity, solidarity and creativity of millions of people through voluntary action.

3. The added value of volunteerism extends far beyond the numbers of people participating in development initiatives. IYV highlighted important qualitative considerations. Value systems in any society have a major influence on the direction and performance of development efforts. Civic engagement through voluntary action is one of the principal manifestations of trust and solidarity within and among communities.

4. When strategically promoted, the combination of scale and intrinsic quality of volunteer participation in the development process reinforces key drivers identified in the MYFF as being vital to development effectiveness. Volunteer action is a valuable adjunct to national capacity building and the promotion of national ownership. Moreover, since volunteerism cuts across all sectors and springs from the basic values and traditions of most societies, it constitutes a powerful force for the forging of strategic partnerships.

III Overview: 2002-2003

A. Main characteristics

5. With its mission of promoting volunteerism, including the mobilization of volunteers, UNV continued to build on its added value by stimulating national policy development on volunteerism, international advocacy and volunteer assignments.

Stimulating national policy development on volunteerism

6. The report of the United Nations Secretary-General to the 57th session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers (A/57/352) highlighted the relevance of volunteerism to achieving the MDGs and underlined the central role of UNV, in collaboration with other stakeholders, in

enhancing the recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteerism. The importance of sustained efforts to further facilitate and support volunteer action was reinforced in a General Assembly resolution (A/RES/57/106) co-sponsored by 143 countries. As focal point for the follow-up to IYV, UNV has set in motion a number of initiatives at the national and international levels.

7. Drawing on its programme experience, UNV is working with partners to stimulate policy debate at the national level with a view to increasing awareness and recognition of the need for official support to voluntary action. To that end, UNV has worked with a number of countries to incorporate volunteerism into their national human development reports (NHDRs), yielding results in eight countries so far. In the same vein, UNV has established a cooperation framework with the International Council on National Youth Policy to promote youth volunteering as an integral part of youth policies.

8. In partnership with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), which encompasses 95 million volunteers worldwide, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), UNV is engaged in research to identify best practices in the formulation of national legislation that promotes volunteerism. This will provide a learning opportunity, through exchange of views and sharing of knowledge, for countries to adopt such legislation. The findings will be presented to parliamentarians in 2004.

9. Efforts are under way to strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices to incorporate volunteer contributions into the system of national accounts. In this regard, UNV established a partnership with the Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies in a three-year pilot programme in nine developing countries. This initiative is expected to contribute significantly to raising awareness at the policy level of the economic contribution of volunteerism and to strengthening the case for budgetary and other support. It should also result in an enhanced capacity of some developing countries to report on aspects of civic participation in achieving the MDGs.

International advocacy

10. UNV continues to advocate at the international level for recognition of the contribution of volunteerism to development and for measures that enhance the role of volunteers in meeting development goals. Building on the broadened partnership base established during IYV, UNV strengthened its collaboration with organizations such as the World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS), the International Association of Volunteer Effort (IAVE), the International Business Leaders Forum and the Inter-American Development Bank. These partnerships generated greater awareness of the added value of volunteer action to society in major global conferences and events, including International Volunteer Day (see paragraph 54).

11. During the IPU Inter-Parliamentary Conference, held in April 2003 in Chile, for example, UNV worked with members to ensure that the final resolution included recommendations to governments and legislators to recognize and facilitate the critical role of voluntary community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in disaster preparedness and response. The role that volunteering plays in raising human capacity was also reflected in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society. Similarly, the Report of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sports for Development and Peace

highlighted the importance of volunteerism in building social cohesion and the need to consider volunteers as a strategic resource when implementing sport-for-development programmes.

12. During the biennium, UNDP and UNV worked to strengthen the analysis and understanding of volunteerism in development. For example, the positive contribution of volunteerism was examined as part of a recent research project led by UNDP that focused on the question of capacity development ("Ownership, Leadership and Transformation: Can We Do Better for Capacity Development?"). Furthermore, as part of its 'Essentials' series, UNDP summarized and disseminated lessons learned on the impact of voluntary action on cementing social norms and inculcating a sense of belonging and civic responsibility.

Volunteer assignments

13. UNV volunteers supported communities and organizations in programme countries through initiatives that brought direct quality-of-life benefits to target populations. Development cooperation activities remained the hallmark of UNV programme implementation. Support to partners in electoral processes, peace-building and humanitarian relief gained momentum. In these activities UNV combines the expertise and knowledge of international and national volunteers to enhance capacity development, reinforce sustainability and promote the spirit of volunteerism and global solidarity. Annex I provides a statistical overview of UNV activities over time, with information, by region, on the number of UNV volunteer assignments and the numbers of individuals involved.

14. Assignments in 2003 increased by 7 per cent over 2001, while the number of individual volunteers grew by 10 per cent to 5,635. UNV volunteers worked in 150 countries and represented a record 165 nationalities, demonstrating the universality of UNV and the opportunity it provides for all citizens to engage in United Nations activities for peace and development. The majority of UNV volunteers (72 per cent in 2003 as compared to 66 per cent in 2001) were developing country nationals, nearly half serving outside their home countries. UNV thus continues to be a concrete expression of South-South cooperation. UNV is committed to ensuring the fullest participation of women, with the number of women volunteers growing in absolute terms by 9 per cent during the biennium and accounting for 37 per cent of all UNV volunteers. In percentage terms, the proportion of women volunteers remained unchanged. The attainment of gender parity continues to be a key objective

15. UNV is responding to demand for more opportunities for citizens to volunteer for development, both locally and internationally. Accordingly, new forms of affiliation, UNV interns and UNV associates, have been developed and operationalized (see paragraphs 67 and 68).

B. Programme activities

16. The following overview of UNV programming contributions is organized according to the five strategic goals outlined in the UNDP MYFF, focussing on those service lines where UNV particularly complements the comparative strength of UNDP and other partners. Across the scope of programme interventions, the uniqueness of UNV resides in its knowledge and grass-roots experience, its ability to build local capacity and ownership based on best practices, and its commitment to

fostering volunteerism as a catalyst for development. The role of the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) in enabling UNV to pioneer innovative pilot activities to test and demonstrate the added value of volunteerism is illustrated throughout.

MYFF Goal 1: Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty

17. UNV is well placed to have a direct impact on activities aimed at attaining the MDG targets and reducing human poverty. It is close to communities in terms of both its people-centred participatory approaches and the physical proximity of most UNV volunteers to the grass roots. Some 27 per cent are engaged in targeted activities at local level, increasing citizen participation in such areas as infrastructure and micro-enterprise development, education, youth and student programmes, information and communications technology and business-community relations.

Service line: Local poverty reduction initiatives; civil society empowerment; youth participation.

18. People-driven development activities and effective CBOs are crucial to the success of poverty reduction programmes. UNV activities in Kyrgyzstan illustrate how UNV volunteers help strengthen local institutions and foster ownership and participation. In support of the country's decentralization programme and with SVF financing, UNV is galvanizing community action by reaching out to some 30,000 people in the poorest and most isolated areas. The stimulus provided by the UNV volunteers is helping local volunteers and self-help groups – now close to 1,200 CBOs – to organize and become an effective force in the community. Particular attention is given to ensuring the engagement of women in determining priorities. Initiatives taken by these groups range from submitting proposals for micro-loans to improve livelihoods to collectively addressing community needs such as building roads to improve access to farm lands.

19. Sustained community involvement is essential for long-term well-being of children and youth. In Niger, UNV works in rural villages to provide opportunities for pre-school education, increasing the odds for children, especially girls, to attend school. UNV volunteers help parents, teachers and community members to organize so as to plan and monitor the construction and management of kindergartens. This allows women to pursue literacy, training and income-generating activities. To date, hundreds of children and mothers have benefited from the initiative. A similar project is being developed in Senegal.

20. In cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNV is complementing efforts of governments in six eastern Caribbean countries in the implementation of Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) programmes. With volunteers help, schools are adapting the curriculum to reflect local values and needs and engaging CSOs, including parent-teachers associations, to reinforce these values at the community level. Results achieved in the last two years include the training of over 2,000 teachers, the engagement of some 3,500 parents in HFLE activities and the establishment of HFLE information management systems. Also noteworthy is that HFLE national policies have been adopted in five of the six countries. In Madagascar, UNV has mobilized communities to help marginalized young people regain their confidence and self-reliance. In addition to counselling, vocational training, and the establishment of micro-enterprise schemes, UNV has developed innovative local partnerships to ensure a lasting network of support for youth. One example is the setting up of a network of over 100 "Volontaires des

quartiers", mostly women who volunteer to help prevent violence and address social exclusion through participatory approaches.

21. Recognizing the contribution that youth can make to achieving the MDGs, UNV is exploring ways to build on and promote a culture of volunteerism so that this vast resource can be better harnessed. Drawing on successful initiatives involving university graduates in Guatemala and Nicaragua, a "Youth With People Participation" project is being pioneered in Bolivia in close cooperation with UNDP and national authorities. Between 2004 and 2007, 1,200 university graduates will contribute as volunteers to Bolivia's national strategy to fight poverty, assisting scores of municipalities and local communities in poverty reduction initiatives. Another example is the Global University Network that UNV has developed in the context of the United Nations Information Technology Service (UNITeS) initiative. Its primary objective is to lever resources and lay foundations for universities to engage in long-term support for volunteering. Currently, UNV is collaborating with the Africa Youth Foundation and universities in Japan, Mexico and Spain. Discussions with universities in Canada and Switzerland as well as institutions in African and South Asian countries are ongoing.

22. With regard to civil society empowerment, UNV is helping to strengthen national organizations focused on volunteerism in countries including China, Indonesia, Mongolia and South Africa. In cooperation with international volunteer organizations and local partners, UNV supports activities such as strengthening management and administrative practices, launching awareness raising campaigns, and encouraging policy- and decision-makers to legislate an enabling environment for volunteering.

Service line: Private-sector development and corporate social engagement.

23. The private sector plays an important role in economic and social development and poverty reduction. UNV supports private enterprise development in programme countries; and encourages companies to support their employees as corporate volunteers. In Ecuador, for example, in the context of a nationwide programme developed by UNDP and the government, UNV, through its volunteers, enables small and medium-sized enterprises to develop employment opportunities and contribute to economic growth in provinces with the highest levels of poverty and migration. In line with recommendations aiming at increasing the contributions of the private sector to build the knowledge and expertise of developing country enterprises – contained in the recent report of the Commission on the Private Sector and Development to the United Nations Secretary-General – UNV signed agreements with a German company and a French non-profit association to promote corporate volunteering, and advanced work on a collaboration agreement with a programme initiated by employees of a multinational oil company.

24. In cooperation with a United Kingdom-based NGO, UNV undertook collaborative research on corporate social engagement by national companies and transnational corporations to better understand their contributions to social development and the role that volunteers play in that process. Research covering Brazil, Ghana, India, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Nigeria, Philippines and South Africa points to a long history of business-community relations in developing countries and economies in transition. It also highlights the considerable scope for enhancing business-community relations in a development context. UNV has subsequently been requested by a multinational oil company in Nigeria to help develop a strategy for engaging communities in identifying local needs and priorities. In Lebanon,

UNV works with the Government and private companies to develop schemes for employees to volunteer in support of youth groups, cooperatives and municipalities.

MYFF Goal 2: Fostering democratic governance

25. Democratic governance is an essential component of the environment necessary for achieving the MDGs, including poverty reduction. During the biennium, some 30 per cent of UNV volunteers were engaged in governance-related activities, including support to local governments in forging linkages with civil society as well as with central government; facilitating outreach for human rights institutions; and promoting transparent and inclusive electoral processes.

Service line: Decentralization and local governance

26. As noted in the Human Development Report 2003, collective mobilization and action are essential components of effective governance. Furthermore, a precondition for successful decentralization is a strong relationship between local government and civil society. In these two areas – creating space for participation and enhancing links among stakeholders –UNV makes strong contributions. In support of the UNDP local governance programme in Albania for example, national and international UNV volunteers serve at the commune, municipal and regional levels to bring together and engage local authorities and communities in participatory development planning and management. As a result, more than 100 CBOs have been established to plan and implement local development projects, mainly in the areas of social infrastructure and health.

27. Strengthening institutional capacities for improved efficiency and accountability is another important component of successful decentralization processes. In Ethiopia, the launch of a national UNV volunteer scheme is helping direct domestic expertise, often concentrated in the capital, to improve regional public sector management. Specific activities include formulating endowment profiles, assessing resource bases for revenue generation and developing computerized systems for managing public resources. In Cambodia, UNV, together with an international NGO, is working with the Government to facilitate the registration of newborn babies through mobile teams. With the improved registration statistics, state and local administration will be better able to target policies and control child labour, trafficking and other illegal practices.

28. The application of e-governance tools and techniques has proved effective in increasing interaction between government and citizens. In partnership with the Federation of Latin American Municipalities and the International Union of Local Authorities, UNV has established and maintains a powerful Web-based database, the Platform for International Municipal Exchanges (PIMEX), which provides local governments with a virtual space to post supply and demand for volunteer exchange. This helps foster cooperation among local governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, and has resulted in technical assistance initiatives involving 35 municipalities from 13 countries.

Service line: Justice and human rights

29. Civic participation in legal and judicial reform and extending the reach of human rights institutions to the grass-roots level are important factors in helping bridge the gap between the public justice system and citizens. In Haiti, UNV intervenes in those decentralized justice structures nearest to the people, strengthening the capacity of peace tribunals, the Ombudsman, the penitentiary

system and CSOs. A recent independent evaluation of UNDP support to the governance programme in Haiti noted that the downstream presence of UNV has helped generate information and perspectives that inform development partners in their strategic planning and policy advisory roles. In Uganda, UNV works with government and other national stakeholders to build knowledge of basic human rights. Activities focus on communities where human rights abuse is pronounced, raising awareness about rights and channels for reporting abuses; improving communication and trust between law enforcement agencies and people; and simplifying procedures in local courts. In Brazil, in line with the national objective to adopt a standard for economic, social and cultural rights, national UNV volunteers research and report human rights abuses and work closely with communities and government to identify relevant policy measures. UNV volunteers working from community telecentres in Jordan encourage local women to use the UNIFEM-sponsored development network for Arab women. They can thus access information on legal rights, leadership opportunities and ways to participate.

30. UNV volunteers have been the mainstay of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) at the district and local levels for several years. A review highlighted how the grass-roots involvement of UNV volunteers, including indigenous volunteers from neighbouring countries, helped the mission identify and take into account human rights issues specific to indigenous people. The process of transferring the functions of the mission to national ownership has begun. National UNV volunteers are working closely with counterparts in the Government, CSOs and human rights organizations to ensure that the knowledge and experience acquired, including the value of volunteerism in advancing human rights, is retained and continues to serve the population.

31. UNV continued to support the Human Rights Strengthening Programme (HURIST) launched by UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In Fiji, work with government and civil society representatives of the Melanesian States identified obstacles to the ratification of human rights treaties and strategies to overcome them. In Kazakhstan, activities were carried out with the Government to develop human rights legislation, establish an Ombudsman's office and train state officials and, with NGOs and the mass media, to monitor and report human rights abuses. In Yemen, UNV focussed on assisting women's groups and training youth volunteers in human rights issues in Yemeni law to assist them in disseminating these values in schools, institutions and associations.

Service line: Electoral systems and processes

32. Supporting new and restored democracies to establish sustainable and transparent electoral processes is necessary for democratic governance. In 2002-2003, UNV demonstrated its capacity to bring together qualified, experienced volunteers of different nationalities and cultures to work primarily at the community level. In partnership with the European Union, UNV provided electoral assistance in Nigeria. Further support in Comoros, Georgia, Indonesia, Kenya and Sierra Leone was provided directly to UNDP country offices. UNV is engaged in the core tasks of voter registration in Afghanistan and actively supporting the work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in planning elections in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia, as well as the expected referendum in Sudan.

MYFF Goal 3: Energy and environment for sustainable development

33. During the biennium, UNV supported programmes dealing with protecting natural and cultural heritage, including issues related to land degradation, management of waste collection and clean water supply. Mobilizing citizen action at the local level and forging links to job creation were features of the work of many UNV volunteers in this field.

34. Promoting the involvement of communities in the sustainable use of common property resources contributes to the successful integration of environmental dimensions into poverty reduction strategies. In Cape Verde, for example, UNV and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) supported the Government in launching an initiative to harness volunteers to address the problems of land degradation, desertification and youth unemployment. National UNV volunteers, together with local partners, conducted training of trainers on social mobilization techniques and initiating pro-environment small businesses. The objective is to raise public awareness of, and community participation in, environmental protection measures and to help young unemployed people to establish environment-friendly enterprises. Other key objectives are to promote a culture of volunteerism among youth and build a national volunteer corps.

35. In Mali, UNV is working with communities in the Dogon country to ensure the preservation of natural and cultural heritages and to direct the benefits accruing from tourism development to disadvantaged communities. Working with customary chiefs, villagers and municipal authorities, UNV volunteers help define priorities, including in preserving and restoring monuments, managing natural sites and developing curricula on environment for schools. They also assist in developing income-generating skills such as training women as tourist guides and helping craftsmen better organize and market their products.

36. UNV supports communities in improving their urban environment. In Nablus and the surrounding villages in the occupied Palestinian territory, for example, volunteers work with village councils, local volunteer associations, municipalities and private sector firms to assess available resources and utilize them to decrease illegal dumping and off-site burning. This contributes to improved collection and safe disposal of solid waste, while encouraging recycling at the household and municipal levels. In Chad, UNV volunteers assisted communities in developing micro-projects to improve the urban environment. This generated jobs through the creation of small-scale businesses catering to services such as waste collection and the maintenance of drinking fountains. The best practices developed in the course of the project will form part of a broader urban development initiative to be supported by UNDP in Chad.

37. UNV collaborates with local governments in Ecuador, Jamaica, and Yemen to mobilize volunteer participation in urban development. This has stimulated volunteer engagement in activities ranging from the repair of schools and the launching of reforestation campaigns to conducting workshops for women on their roles as volunteers for environment. A knowledge base of best practice examples and lessons learned is under way and will be made available to other cities wishing to harness volunteering for urban development.

MYFF Goal 4: Crisis prevention and recovery

38. Emergency response to conflict and natural disasters, longer-term prevention actions and assistance in the recovery process are major areas of involvement for UNV. Nearly 40 per cent of UNV volunteers supported activities such as assisting in the reintegration of ex-combatants, fostering inter-communal collaboration among divided groups, conducting civic education, promoting disaster preparedness and delivering humanitarian assistance.

Service line: Conflict prevention and peace building

39. In the wake of conflicts, volunteer action has proven to be an important element in reconciliation and reconstruction, and the building and restoring of trust. In Niger, UNV helps ex-combatants reintegrate into their communities as part of the consolidated peace process. In addressing immediate needs, UNV volunteers work alongside ex-combatants to identify income-generating activities and implement micro-projects. Ventures have been established involving more than 700 ex-combatants in activities ranging from livestock trading to clothing and jewellery making. More broadly, the volunteers promote inter-communal activities such as regional meetings of traditional leaders on conflict resolution and peace promotion in secondary schools. The project also supported a rural radio station set up by local volunteers to broadcast programmes and peace messages in French and local languages.

40. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNV helps foster cooperation among Bosniak, Croat and Serb youth. UNV volunteers from abroad and within the country are supporting multi-ethnic summer camps, facilitating a web site managed by youth volunteers to reach youth in other communities, and setting up local youth advisory boards with members from different ethnic backgrounds. In Guinea, in collaboration with national radio stations, UNDP and NGOs, UNV recently launched a project to promote a culture of peace using mass media, the first such initiative in the country. Activities conducted by national and international UNV volunteers focus on conflict prevention and civic education with a view to promoting a spirit of trust and dialogue among Guineans, including internally displaced persons and refugees.

Service line: Recovery

41. UNV experience in rehabilitation efforts within post-conflict environments is an important asset to partners in the United Nations system and the countries served. The UNDP Bureau for crisis prevention and recovery team and UNV set up a rapid-deployment facility to establish a standby team of trained, experienced volunteers who can be immediately deployed to UNDP country offices. Over 20 UNDP country offices have benefited from this facility.

42. UNV continued to support activities of United Nations system humanitarian agencies in areas such as food distribution, water, shelter, health treatment and coordination, in over 50 countries. Over 600 UNV volunteers served with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2003, double the number in previous years. Participation in the work of the World Food Programme (WFP) also increased significantly, including in HIV/AIDS related activities. In line with an Office of Internal Oversight Services recommendation, UNHCR and UNV are finalizing a global memorandum of understanding reflecting the added value that volunteers and national service bring to joint activities.

43. Helping bridge the gap between relief and development is an area where UNV plays an important role. In Afghanistan, for example, 244 UNV volunteers, representing 64 nationalities and including expatriate Afghans, were deployed in response to requests from the Government and almost all the United Nations organizations in the country. Focused on enhancing national capacity and ownership, the volunteers supported activities in urban development, finance and administration, gender, education, health and the reintegration of refugees.

Service line: Special initiatives for countries in transition

44. The capacity of UNV to support countries in transition is illustrated by the role it has played in East Timor. Between 1999 and 2003, some 3,000 UNV volunteers from over 100 countries have supported electoral processes, national reconstruction and social and administrative capacity building. Serving as the outreach arm of the United Nations, the added value of the volunteers lies in their proximity to local populations and their close interaction with them. The resulting confidence has enabled them to energize local people towards committed engagement in their own development process. UNV remains committed to helping develop capacity in East Timor. One example is UNV support to the Ministry of Planning and Finance in the implementation of the National Development Plan, strengthening the capacity of CSOs in poverty reduction and gender-equality activities at the district and community levels.

45. UNV involvement in operations under DPKO auspices continued to gain momentum. In 2003, the relationship between DPKO and UNDP/UNV was further consolidated through the signing of a global memorandum of understanding and a note on guiding principles that recognizes that UNV is more than a staffing modality and commits both organizations to further promote the added value of volunteerism in peacekeeping. With nearly 2000 UNV assignments undertaken in support of DPKO during the biennium, UNV volunteers constituted an important part of the civilian staffing of most operations. During this period, every new operation established by DPKO has involved UNV volunteers, and UNV now participates in the planning stages of DPKO interventions.

46. A new development in UNV activities in many peacekeeping missions is that, in addition to their assignments, volunteers are mobilizing local volunteers as well as United Nations mission staff to support community level initiatives. In the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, UNV volunteers joined 75 local volunteers in building hospital beds, renovating a maternity ward and refurbishing a local school for nearly 300 pupils. In other missions, UNV volunteers have rallied local communities to teach HIV-positive women new textile dyeing techniques in Eritrea, rehabilitated a centre for the blind in Kosovo, and dug wells for a children's home in Sierra Leone.

Service line: Natural disaster reduction

47. Drawing on indigenous knowledge can help strengthen the capacity of communities to engage in natural disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery activities. Following severe droughts and extreme food shortages in Malawi, national UNV volunteers supported local authorities in the efficient distribution of relief aid. They subsequently worked with communities in disaster preparedness, including hunger prevention and mitigation planning, vulnerability mapping and setting up drought monitoring systems.

48. Following major natural disasters in Orissa and Gujarat, India, over 200 Indian UNV volunteers were deployed to disaster risk management projects, functioning as key links between communities, local administration and NGOs. UNV volunteers helped design and develop the India Disaster Resource Network, an online nation-wide inventory of resources for emergency response to disasters. They trained district and state authorities to access and use the network to mobilize support for evacuation, search and rescue, medical aid and other relief priorities. When floods hit Sri Lanka in 2003, affecting more than 600,000 people, a team of Indian UNV volunteers arrived within hours to help streamline information collection, conduct damage assessment and coordinate distribution of relief in the worst affected areas. They also acted as focal points at the district level for local and international donor assistance.

MYFF Goal 5: Responding to HIV/AIDS

49. UNV has been deeply committed to the fight against HIV/AIDS for a number of years, mobilizing and facilitating voluntary action at the community level in support of national efforts to address the consequences of the pandemic.

50. Voluntary action was recently recognized as one of the principal modalities in the implementation of the UNDP flagship programme known as the Southern Africa Capacity Initiative (SACI) to address the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS. UNV involvement includes the engagement of local volunteers to help deliver essential services, building on existing voluntary action and drawing on untapped resources such as graduates and retirees as well as the mobilization of UNV volunteers, drawn mainly from within Africa, to offset the loss of skilled human resources and help sustain local capacity.

51. UNV continues to support the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA), an ongoing initiative of UNDP and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). UNV volunteers – many of them HIV positive – are working with communities in 12 countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean states to build effective self-help networks, support health and home-based care, challenge discrimination and promote prevention programmes. UNV is extending support to projects in Burundi and Indonesia and aims to create a regional voluntary GIPA support network in Southeast Asia.

52. UNV draws on partnerships to advocate broadly for the role of volunteerism in HIV/AIDS initiatives. For example, UNV, IFRC and IPU hosted joint events at the Global Conference on HIV/AIDS in 2002 to increase public awareness of the critical role of volunteers in addressing HIV/AIDS.

C. Follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers 2001

53. UNV undertook actions called for in resolution 57/106 of the General Assembly on follow-up to IYV. These included efforts to raise awareness of volunteerism, to increase networking and to support developing countries in promoting domestic voluntary action. Many of the activities undertaken have become integral to the work of UNV. UNV is acting as the secretariat for the report of the Secretary-General to the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 on follow-up to IYV.

54. With the support of UNV, a growing number of countries took action to ensure that the potential of International Volunteer Day was fully realized. First, the

number of countries marking the day grew from 61 in 2002 to 125 in 2003. Second, representation from developing countries increased from 45 to 91. Finally, in 2003, over 70 countries focused activities on the contribution of volunteerism to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, compared to only seven in 2002. International Volunteer Day is proving to be a highly effective platform to spread awareness of the power of volunteerism and help channel the energies of citizens who wish to volunteer.

55. Another follow-up to IYV has been the development of a global Internet volunteer resource base, www.worldvolunteerweb.org, which facilitates networking among the global volunteer community and houses an ever-increasing body of information highlighting the crucial role of volunteer action in attaining MDG targets. Currently, more than 50,000 organizations and individuals access the portal each month. Looking ahead, steps have been taken to establish a platform that will accommodate regional portals, involve online volunteers in building the site and facilitate interactive services to allow organizations and individuals to contribute towards MDG-related activities.

D. Lessons learned from reviews and evaluations

56. Addressing findings from earlier evaluations, UNV took steps to refine the indicators used to assess project results, identify the added value of UNV contributions and determine actions needed to address limitations and strengthen programme performance. To that end, UNV commissioned 26 project, thematic and country evaluations covering activities and achievements of around 1,300 UNV volunteers in more than 30 countries.

57. The findings show that much of the added value of UNV lies in the volunteers' ability to combine technical skills and professionalism with motivation, dedication and flexibility. It was noted that in sensitive areas such as human rights, HIV/AIDS and conflict resolution, UNV can be particularly effective in building the confidence and trust of communities by bringing the neutrality and universality of the United Nations identity to volunteerism. Mixed teams of national and international volunteers were identified as an effective mechanism to enhance experience and knowledge sharing, as well as maximizing the benefits of South-South cooperation. The contributions of UNV in stimulating local volunteer action and the ethos of volunteerism within communities was also recognized.

58. Some evaluations confirmed the continuous need to ensure that all UNV volunteers identify with the mission of UNV even though the majority serve in programmes and activities implemented by other organizations. In order to fully realize the potential of UNV volunteers to advocate for volunteerism and be an effective force in mobilizing local volunteer action in support of the MDGs, UNV and its partners must ensure that they are sufficiently equipped and supported. To that end, UNV is producing a set of methodological and practical guides for UNV programme officers and volunteers. The guides cover issues such as how to incorporate volunteerism in programming and national development frameworks; ways to stimulate volunteer action in the work of host organizations and the communities in which UNV volunteers serve; and actions that can be taken to support the establishment and optimum operational capacity of a volunteer infrastructure.

59. A new online volunteer periodic reporting system was introduced in April 2003 to enable UNV to provide a more accurate picture both of the overall profile of its contribution to development and the individual contributions of the UNV volunteers. While compliance rates need to improve, more than 2,000 reports were received by year's end. Analysis of the reports reveals a need to strengthen briefing of UNV volunteers and improve operational support. Responses show that UNV volunteers have a high level of work satisfaction overall, with the majority perceiving their assignments as well on track to achieve the stated objectives. The reporting system was recently upgraded in the light of experience.

60. An integral part of organizational learning and development for UNV is to review with partners how they perceive their relationship with UNV and identify ways in which it could be strengthened. In 2003, UNV commissioned the fourth in a series of independent reviews to assess its relationship with 25 of its cooperating organizations – national focal points that assist UNV by mobilizing human and financial resources. The review found a distinct shift in the nature of the issues raised, from an almost exclusive focus on operational matters in previous reviews towards substantive and policy-related concerns. The organizations praised UNV for its role in initiating new types of volunteer activity, strengthening the capacity of national and local volunteer organizations, and making the case in international forums for the importance of volunteerism. They look to UNV to take a more prominent role in these areas.

IV. Resources management

A. Financial resources

61. Annex II provides a financial overview of UNV. Information on regular resources relates to the Special Voluntary Fund. The designation 'other resources' relates to (a) cash contributions to UNV under trust funds, co-financing arrangements and the biennial support budget (approximately 47 per cent) and (b) the financial value of volunteer assignments charged directly to agencies and partners (approximately 53 per cent). Although the latter does not represent cash contributions flowing through the UNV books, it is incorporated in the overview to present the total financial value of UNV activities.

62. As reflected in annex II, the total estimated value of activities carried out in 2002-2003 was $218.4 million, about 4 per cent more than in 2000-2001. Of that total, $14.7 million, or approximately 7 per cent, was financed from the SVF and $203.7 million, or approximately 93 per cent, from other resources. The Administrator foresees further growth in the programme in 2004-2005 due to increased activities in the context of the UNDP Southern Africa Capacity Initiative, a sustained high level of activities in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and increased activity in support of other United Nations organizations. This is reflected in the forecasts for 2004-2005.

The Special Voluntary Fund

63. During 2002-2003, a total of $ 14.1 million was approved under the SVF for new pilot and experimental projects. Total expenditures during the period reached $14.7 million, an increase of 22 per cent compared to the previous biennium. The

balance as at 31 December 2003 was $24.0 million, out of which $19.0 million was fully committed.

Other resources

64. Activities financed from resources other than the SVF amounted to $203.7 million or 93 per cent of the total. Of the total of $169.1 million in programme expenditure, approximately 20 per cent was financed from UNDP programme resources, 23 per cent from other United Nations organizations, 41 per cent under DPKO missions and 16 per cent under trust funds, full funding and other co-financing arrangements.

Biennial support budget

65. With regard to the biennial support budget for UNV, in its decision 2003/22 the Executive Board approved the proposals of the Administrator contained in document DP/2003/28. In accordance with those proposals, the total UNV support budget, financed from all sources, is estimated at $38.5 million for 2004-2005. Of this total, the component financed from voluntary contributions to UNDP is $26 million, 21 per cent less than the highest levels in 1996-1997. The part of the UNV support budget financed from non-UNDP sources is estimated to increase to $12.5 million in 2004-2005. This is consistent with the fact that the strongest growth of the programme has been in non-UNDP financed activities.

B. Volunteer resources

66. UNV continued to improve its traditional methods of recruitment through UNDP country offices and cooperating organizations, and the Internet. With respect to the latter, the expanded outreach capacity has resulted in a wider range of talents and increased representation of nationalities on the roster. Technical refinements have also allowed more rapid processing of applications and an improved response rate to individuals wishing to volunteer. Equally important, the online application system directs the growing number of individuals interested in volunteering, but who do not have a UNV volunteer profile, to alternative opportunities to volunteer. To help build institutional capacity, the online application system has been adapted and made available for UNDP country offices and other organizations to establish their own databases of candidates for volunteer assignments.

67. UNV is engaging a wider group of citizens to volunteer for development both locally and internationally. UNV is expanding the intern scheme launched during the previous biennium, which enables younger people with more limited experience to participate in development activities. At the request of programme countries, UNV interns have been involved in areas including governance, ICT, poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, environmental protection and disaster management. The programme in Bolivia described in paragraph 21 is an innovative example.

68. The new UNV associate scheme embraces volunteers who are not under contract to UNV but are directly or indirectly mobilized through and/or for a UNV-supported activity. A typical example is the online volunteering service launched in 2000. Now the largest database of online volunteering resources for development globally, it is an effective means both for individuals to share their skills and time from their homes and for organizations to access knowledge and expertise in areas ranging from website design, translation to resource mobilization. Some 500 organizations, including United Nations partner organizations, NGOs and

CBOs, are drawing upon the services offered by more than 12,000 online volunteers – 50 per cent of whom are women – from 186 countries. Over 45 per cent of online volunteers are from developing countries, representing an important development in South-South cooperation. The service also supports organizational capacity building by providing advice and resources in areas such as setting up online discussion groups and best practices in online volunteer management.

69. With an increasing number of UNV volunteers serving in crisis regions, UNV – in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) and partner agencies – continued to conduct activities to enhance the safety of UNV volunteers. These steps complemented the United Nations security management system at the country level, into which UNV volunteers are fully integrated. Specifically, missions were undertaken to assess the security situation and strengthen safety coverage for UNV volunteers assigned to hazardous duty stations. A series of safety and security workshops for UNV programme officers and administrative assistants was conducted, bringing together 70 participants from 44 countries. Conducting follow-up workshops in their respective host countries, these participants subsequently reached out to some 1,500 UNV volunteers. In addition, UNV, in coordination with UNSECOORD and with the support of the administrations of the peacekeeping missions , organized security awareness training and stress management workshops for over 1,500 UNV volunteers serving in peacekeeping operations. The Administrator and UNV management attach the utmost importance to the safety and security of UNV volunteers at all times.

C. Management and administration

70. Actions taken in the area of management and administration built on the achievements of previous years. Activities are guided by a well-established framework of values and operating principles and seven key planning goals relating to: policy; IYV; partnerships; people; performance; external resources; and internal resources. These are defined within the broader framework of the contribution of UNV through the prism of the UNDP MYFF, including as it relates to achieving the MDGs.

71. During the period September 2002-December 2003, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) carried out an extensive review of the UNV administrative and management structure and methods. The JIU issued its final report (JIU/REP/2003/7) in December 2003. It concluded that UNV has proved to be dynamic and responsive to changing and expanding demands, with a high degree of commitment to continuous improvement, an enhanced profile, a distinctive image and strengthened core values. The JIU made constructive recommendations and suggestions for further changes in a number of areas.

72. The Administrator notes that the findings of the JIU, particularly as expressed in the main body of the report, confirm that the positive impact of actions taken in the area of management and administration have been sustained and built upon. These actions were guided in particular by the far-reaching workflow review undertaken by UNV itself and the follow-up to the management audit carried out by the UNDP Office of Audit and Performance Review in the late 1990s. These will be

further refined in the context of the newly introduced Enterprise Resources Planning system.

73. In line with its commitment to promoting effective organizational learning, the UNV learning team continued to strengthen the skills and knowledge base of UNV staff. The learning programme is designed around a number of annual inputs: the learning objectives outlined by staff in their performance plans; an analysis of priority role requirements in connection with business plans at the unit level; organizational data gathered by an independent staff (climate) survey held late each year, and a full staff retreat and senior staff retreat held at the beginning of each year.

IV. Challenges and opportunities

74. The Administrator believes that for UNDP and UNV, the biennium has reinforced the conviction that UNV must continue to play a key role in maintaining the momentum towards the recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteering for development at all levels. A much better understanding is emerging of the value-added contribution of UNV to development initiatives through its work encompassing the mobilization of volunteers, newly developing areas such as international advocacy and support to national policy formulation processes.

75. Against this background, opportunities as well as challenges continue to exist. There have been important changes in many countries in the way volunteerism is perceived, particularly with respect to the vital contribution it can make to achieving the MDGs. Considerable scope remains, however, for translating this awareness into concrete policy measures and support. In this connection, many developed countries recognize the critical role of volunteer action in their own societies and extend direct support accordingly. Yet it has been a challenge to gain acceptance by some of those countries of the importance of their concrete support for volunteerism and volunteer action in developing countries. In the view of the Administrator, the level of contributions to the UNV Special Voluntary Fund is a measure of commitment in that regard. The SVF is critical to enabling UNV to play a catalytic role in developing innovative and relevant approaches. Many of those developed in the past have been mainstreamed over the years and have increased the capacity of UNV to respond to the evolving needs of programme countries.

76. A central organizing principle of the work of UNV is to build itself into a highly networked programme drawing strength from strategic relationships and partnerships at all levels. The alignment between the UNDP and UNV policy and programme frameworks is a key factor. As a theme that cuts across all sectors, efforts to include volunteerism in programme country and United Nations system development frameworks and reports such as the common country assessments, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, United Nations development assistance frameworks and NHDRs must be intensified. Systematic alliance building with international NGOs, academia and the private sector should also continue to be pursued. The potential to achieve synergies between the advocacy and service sides of the volunteer equation, and the power that such synergies can unleash towards meeting the MDGs, is evident and greater than ever.

Annex I

UNV statistical overview

Assignments and volunteers by region, origin and gender, 2000-2003

UNV assignments Total	2000				2001				2002				2003			
	5 181				5 432				5554				5832			
	International	National	Total	Percentage	International	National	Total	Percentage	International	National	Total	Percentage	International	National	Total	Percentage
Region																
Africa	1 147	429	1 576	30%	1 058	520	1 578	29%	1364	774	2138	38%	1580	814	2394	41%
Asia and the Pacific	1 180	302	1 482	29%	1 658	444	2 102	39%	1335	444	1779	32%	907	522	1429	25%
Arab States	167	119	286	6%	103	157	260	5%	130	182	312	6%	205	182	387	7%
Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States	966	153	1 119	22%	647	133	780	14%	556	159	715	13%	527	198	725	12%
Latin America and the Caribbean	479	239	718	14%	434	278	712	13%	313	297	610	11%	354	543	897	15%
Total	3 939	1 242	5 181	100%	3 900	1 532	5 432	100%	3698	1586	5554	100%	3573	2259	5832	100%
Percentage	76%	24%	100%		72%	28%	100%		67%	33%	100%		61%	39%	100%	

UNV volunteers Total	4 780		5 090		5234		5635	
Origin								
From industrial countries	1 597	33%	1 743	34%	1595	31%	1602	28%
From developing countries	3 183	67%	3 347	66%	3639	69%	4033	72%
Gender								
Male	3 086	65%	3 207	63%	3300	63%	3577	63%
Female	1 694	35%	1 883	37%	1934	37%	2058	37%

Annex II

UNV resource planning table

Projected resource availability and utilization of resources *

(Millions of dollars)

Resources available	2002-2003			2004-2005		
	Regular resources (SVF)	Other resources	Total resources	Regular resources (SVF)	Other resources	Total resources
Opening balance	24.9	25.7	50.6	24.0	25.5	49.5
Income						
Contributions [a]	9.0	202.9	211.9	10.0	215.0	225.0
Interest, miscellaneous income and pro-forma external costs	4.9	0.6	5.5	5.0	1.0	6.0
Total available	38.8	229.2	268.0	39.0	241.5	280.5
Use of resources						
A. Programme expenditures	14.7	169.1	183.8	16.0	178.0	194.0
B. Net transfers/adjustments	0.0	-	0.0	-	-	-
C. Biennial support budget						
Programme support		24.6	24.6		26.9	26.9
Management and administration		10.0	10.0		11.6	11.6
Total	14.7	203.7	218.4	16.0	216.5	232.5
Closing balance	24.0	25.5	49.5	23.0	25.0	48.0
Commitments for future years						
A. Projects, programme support, Management/administration	18.3	11.6	29.9	18.0	15.0	33.0
B. External costs of serving volunteers	0.7	-	0.7	-	-	-
Total commitments	19.0	11.6	30.6	18.0	15.0	33.0
Closing balance (uncommitted resources)	5.0	14.0	19.0	5.0	10.0	15.0

* Note. As a result of rounding, (sub)totals in this table may differ slightly from the sum of individual components.

[a] Includes under Other resources the UNV biennial support budget, which is part of the UNDP biennial appropriations